

"He's extremely going to be a loss to me, but he's passed on so much wisdom. It's almost like passing on the torch because we connected so much over the years," Jordan said. Former Vallejo mayor Terry Curtola said he'd known Thurston most of his adult life.

"Always was an adviser to me in my political career. Just what I like to call a good old boy Vallejoan. He was always supporting everything that went on. Always had the best of Vallejo at heart. Just a good man," Curtola said.

"I think what I like the most about Bill more than anything, he covered all the diversities of our whole community. You could never pinpoint him. He was just a man that I always went to for advice. Even when I didn't go to him for advice, he'd call and give it to me anyway." Curtola said.

INTRODUCTION OF NEW UNITED STATES GLOBAL HIV PREVENTION STRATEGY TO ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF WOMEN AND GIRLS ACT OF 2004

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 9, 2004

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker I rise today to talk about an urgent need in regards to our Global HIV/AIDS Initiative—the need to address the disproportionately growing effect of HIV/AIDS upon women and girls.

Today there are an estimated 40 million people infected with HIV/AIDS throughout the world.

For a number of reasons, women and girls are biologically, socially, and economically more vulnerable to HIV infection than men, and today they represent more than half of all individuals who are infected with HIV worldwide.

In sub-Saharan Africa the story is even worse, as women and girls make up 60 percent of those infected with HIV/AIDS.

Today we are undoubtedly facing a dramatic feminization of the global pandemic.

Why are women more vulnerable?

In many cases, women still have inadequate information about how HIV is transmitted, how it can be prevented, and how it can be treated.

Cultural and social norms in many developing countries, and in some cases even here in the United States, prevent frank and open discussion about sex and HIV/AIDS.

But perhaps worst of all, women are most vulnerable because of the continuing legal, social, and economic inequalities that contribute to, and are the result of persistent and culturally ingrained gender discrimination throughout the world.

This gender discrimination is responsible for devaluing the rights of women to attend school, earn an independent living, control their own bodies and choose their own sexual partners, retain control over their own property, and speak their minds.

And with the loss of each such right, women become more vulnerable to HIV infection.

Studies show that without an education, women are at a much higher risk of acquiring HIV/AIDS.

Without an independent source of income, women are forced to rely on men for food,

clothing, shelter, etc., thus perpetuating an unequal power balance in their relationships.

Without being able to control their own bodies and choose their sexual partners, women are frequently treated as commodities to be bought or sold, without rights under the law.

This perpetuates a culture that accepts rape and violence against women as something that is commonplace, and without punishment.

And women who have no right to refuse the sexual advances of men cannot control the circumstances of their sexual encounters and are unable to insist on abstinence, faithfulness on behalf of their partners, or the use of condoms.

Without the ability to own or inherit property, women are in constant danger of being kicked out of their own homes, and losing control of their families most basic productive resources.

Ultimately, women who fear the consequences of speaking openly are powerless to advocate for any of these rights and are consigned to accept a second class status in their societies.

In the context of our moral tradition and our common humanity, that is just plain wrong.

But when it comes to combating HIV/AIDS, for women it can be deadly.

Working jointly with my colleagues in Congress and the Administration, last year we established the Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief to treat 2 million people, prevent 7 million new infections, and care for 10 million individuals.

But Mr. Speaker, I believe that if we do not aggressively target the needs of women, and work to eliminate the factors that contribute to the increased vulnerability of women to HIV, we will never reach our targets.

That is why today, along with 54 of my colleagues, I am introducing a bill entitled the New United States Global HIV Prevention Strategy to Address Women and Girls Act of 2004.

By recognizing the inadequacy of our current HIV Prevention efforts, which focus on the "ABC" approach of Abstinence, Being faithful, or using a Condom, my bill would seek to revise our current HIV Prevention strategy to place an emphasis on the needs of women and girls.

In doing so, my bill would require the President to develop a comprehensive, integrated, and culturally appropriate HIV prevention strategy for each of the countries receiving assistance to combat HIV/AIDS that includes:

Increasing access to female condoms—including training to ensure effective and consistent use. Accelerating the de-stigmatization of HIV/AIDS—as women are generally at a disadvantage in combating stigma. Empowering women and girls to avoid cross-generational sex and reduce the incidence of child-marriage. Reducing violence against women. Supporting the development of micro-enterprise programs and other such efforts to assist women in developing and retaining independent economic means. Promoting positive male behavior toward women and girls. Supporting expanded educational opportunities for women and girls. Protecting the property and inheritance rights of women. Coordinating HIV prevention services with existing health care services—including mother to child transmission programs—and family planning and reproductive health services. Promoting gender equality by supporting the development of civil society organizations focused on the needs of women, and by encour-

aging the creation and effective enforcement of legal frameworks that guarantee women equal rights and equal protection under the law.

At the same time, my bill would also seek to balance funding for our HIV prevention initiatives by stripping out misguided language in last year's Global AIDS bill that guaranteed that 33% of our prevention funds would go towards abstinence only programs.

Instituting a blanket requirement for abstinence spending in our global prevention programs sends the message that religious ideology coming out of Washington DC is driving our global HIV/AIDS programs rather than sound science and the reality of the situation on the ground.

Our policy should be to provide flexibility in our global HIV prevention strategies to support a variety of culturally appropriate prevention initiatives based on need and the specific HIV infection trends and gaps of each country.

In the best interests of improving the Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, and achieving our goal of preventing 7 million new infections, I believe that we must make this change.

And we must also make this change because we owe it to all the women who are left vulnerable and powerless because of social, political, legal, and economic inequalities that allow HIV to fester and spread.

If we do not address these underlying issues in a comprehensive manner, then I fear that our efforts to prevent the disease from spreading will only be in vain.

I invite all my colleagues to join me in support of this legislation, and I urge the International Relations Committee to move swiftly to take it up.

HONORING THE MEMORY OF THE HON. JOHN HAWKINS

HON. JO BONNER

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 9, 2004

Mr. BONNER. Mr. Speaker, Jefferson County, Alabama, and indeed the entire state recently lost a dear friend, and I rise today to honor him and pay tribute to his memory.

Representative John Hawkins was a devoted family man who spent over 28 years in public service, serving from 1959 until 1965 in the Alabama House of Representatives, and from 1966 until 1974 in the Alabama State Senate. Following a period of sixteen years out of the public spotlight, he again answered the call to service and began a new period in the state house in 1990. He was continuing to represent House District 47 in the state capital when he became ill earlier this year.

Throughout his professional career, he was dedicated to bringing better opportunities to all the residents of Hoover, Vestavia Hills, and Jefferson County in Alabama, and was a tireless advocate for his constituency. Representative Hawkins sponsored countless bills during his career in the legislature, but is perhaps best known for his championing the cause of automobile safety. In 1991, he was instrumental in the passage of Alabama's first state law that requires drivers and front-seat passengers to use safety belts. Eight years later, he helped to push through an amendment that gives police officers the authority to stop vehicle operators for violations of the seatbelt law alone.